DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 386 713 CS 012 272

AUTHOR Sensenbaugh, Roger
TITLE Reading Recovery. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Bloomington, IN.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-CS-95-09
PUB DATE 95
CONTRACT RR93002011
NOTE 3p.
AVAILABLE FROM ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, Indiana University, 2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150, Bloomington, IN 47408-2698.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cost Effectiveness; *Early Intervention; Grade 1; Primary Education; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; *Remedial Reading; Teacher Education; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests; *Reading Recovery Projects

ABSTRACT

Noting that Reading Recovery appears to be both effective and fairly non-controversial, this digest discusses aspects of the Reading Recovery program. Elements of the Reading Recovery program and a typical Reading Recovery lesson are described; issues of the importance of teacher education and teacher role in those lessons are addressed; the existing literature in the ERIC database regarding the effectiveness of Reading Recovery is reviewed; and the cost effectiveness of the program is discussed. Contains 10 references. (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC Digest

Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication EDO-CS-95-09

Indiana University
2805 E. 10th St., Suite 150
D106
Bloomington, IN 47408-2698
(812) 855-5847; (800) 759-4723

Reading Recovery

by Roger Sensenbaugh

ED 386 713

This *Digest* discusses elements of the Reading Recovery program, describes a typical reading recovery lesson, addresses issues of the importance of teacher education and teacher role in those lessons, reviews the existing literature in the ERIC database regarding the effectiveness of Reading Recovery, and discusses the cost effectiveness of the program.

Introduction

In the often contentious world of beginning reading instruction, marked by the sharply differing opinions of advocates of intensive phonics instruction and those who support the whole language approach, Reading Recovery (r) appears to be fairly non-controversial. Combining extensive teacher education with an emphasis on the development of phonological awareness and the use of contextual information to assist reading, Reading Recovery seems to offer the lowest-achieving first-grade children an effective method of reading and writing instruction. Reading Recovery continues to generate interest among educators, parents, and administrators. Journal articles, conference papers, books, research reports on Reading Recovery continue to be added to the ERIC database. Unofficially, Reading Recovery is the topic on which this Clearinghouse's User Services specialists currently receive the most requests for information. Earlier responses by this Clearinghouse to this continued interest in Reading Recovery include two annotated bibliographies (Sensenbaugh, 1994; Denner, 1993).

Introduced into the United States from New Zealand in the mid 1980s, Reading Recovery projects have been implemented in nearly every state. In addition, Reading Recovery is being implemented in Australia, Canada, and England.

What Is Reading Recovery?

Reading Recovery (Clay, 1985) offers daily half-hour one-on-one tutorial sessions for students who are having trouble learning to read after one year of formal instruction. The program is supplementary and short-term, with most students needing from 12 to 16 weeks of instruction (Pollock, 1994) before they are successfully discontinued from the program. A combination of teacher judgment and systematic evaluation procedures identify those lowest-achieving children for whom Reading Recovery was designed. The program's goal is to bring students up to the level of their peers and to give students the assistance they need to develop independent reading strategies. Once students are reading at a level equivalent to that of their peers, they are discontinued from the program.

Reading Recovery is designed to provide the social interaction that supports the students' ability to work in their "zone of proximal development"—just beyond their level of actual development—with a supportive adult who helps them solve problems and to perform. Clay's theory of learning to read is based on the idea that children construct cognitive systems to understand the world and language. These cognitive systems develop as self-extending systems that generate further learning through the use of multiple sources of information (Clay, 1985; Pinnell, 1994).

A Typical Reading Recovery Lesson

During the daily half-hour sessions, children read many small books, some of which are written in a style close to that of oral language. The books also often use predictable language. Teachers keep a running record to analyze the child's reading performance. Children also compose and read their own messages or stories. In addition, children read slightly more challenging texts that they have not read before. Teachers provide detailed support for the children as they read these more difficult texts. Magnetic alphabet letters might be used to assist in analyzing words. Reading skills are taught in the context of extended reading and writing by Reading Recovery teachers who have completed a year-long inservice education program that focuses on moment-to-moment responses to children's actions and behavior.

Teacher's Role

An essential component of the Reading Recovery program is the training of the teachers who provide the tutorial instruction. Reading Recovery teachers learn to observe, analyze, and interpret the reading and writing behaviors of individual students and to design and implement an individual program to meet each student's needs. Just as the Reading Recovery children engage in social interaction with the teacher, Reading Recovery teachers engage in social interaction with their colleagues and mentors to construct a view of learning and teaching that supports literacy learning (Gaffney, 1993).

Roger Sensenbaugh is the CIJE Coordinator for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

CS012272

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Pinnell (1994) expanded earlier research on the effectiveness of Reading Recovery by controlling for a variety of local factors at the school level and by allowing for a comparative inference in relation to traditional remedial programs targeting at-risk first-grade children. In addition to finding that Reading Recovery was the most effective of the five programs evaluated, Pinnell found that one-on-one instruction was essential for the lowest-achieving students, and that teacher training was an important factor in the success of Reading Recovery.

Is Reading Recovery Effective?

Reading Recovery's seemingly non-controversial nature is nowhere more apparent than in the research base examining the program's effectiveness. Nearly all of the documents in the ERIC database find that the program is effective and recommend the program with only minor reservations. An extended series of studies of the Reading Recovery program as implemented in Ohio (one of the earliest Reading Recovery programs in the United States) find that the program is successful in accelerating 3 out of 4 students up to the level of their peers (Pollock, 1994). Each of the series of reports ends with the recommendation that the program be continued and a list of recommendations regarding specific aspects of the program that could be improved.

Areas of criticism or need for further research include the long-term effectiveness of the program (Center, 1992), the kind of reading skills to be emphasized (Chapman, 1991), the program's cost effectiveness (discussed below), and problems of implementing the program (Pinnell, 1994).

Making the general claim that Reading Recovery is an effective program is somewhat misleading. Existing research ranges from case studies of particular teachers or students all the way up to detailed analyses of state-wide programs. Although "Reading Recovery" is a registered trademark of the Ohio State University, and authorized programs use Marie Clay's materials, the various Reading Recovery programs in the United States differ somewhat in how they are developed, implemented, and assessed. Perhaps it is more precise to say that existing research validates the effectiveness of the specific Reading Recovery programs examined so far.

Glynn (1992), while noting the clear gains made by Reading Recovery pupils, brings up another area of concern—how to coordinate Reading Recovery instruction and regular classroom instruction so that students who are successfully discontinued from the program can continue to succeed on independent reading tasks in the very different environment of the regular classroom.

Cost Effectiveness

While only a comparatively few documents in the ERIC database address Reading Recovery's cost effectiveness, the program's high per-pupil cost (compared to other intervention programs) is enough to give any administrator or taxpayer pause. As Dyer (1992) points out, however, the initial high cost is offset by the money saved through (1) not having to retain low-achieving students in the first grade; (2) not having to place students in special education or Chapter 1 programs; and (3) not mislabelling a child as "learning disabled" when in fact the child needed only the brief, supplementary intervention provided by Reading Recovery.

Dyer concludes (based on a cost-benefit analysis) that Reading Recovery is an educationally sound and cost-effective early intervention program for helping children who are at-risk of early reading failure.

References

Center, Yola, et al. (1992). "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Reading Recovery: A Critique." *Educational Psychology*, 12(3-4), 305-13. [EJ 478 469]

Chapman, James W., and William E. Turner (1991). "Recovering Reading Recovery." *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 17(1), 59-71. [EJ 445 894]

Clay, Marie M. (1985). "The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties. Third Edition." Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. [ED 263 529]

Denner, Michael, Comp. (1993). "Reading Recovery Research, 1986-1992: Citations and Abstracts from the ERIC Database." Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. [ED 376 449]

Dyer, Philip C. (1992). "Reading Recovery: A Cost-Effectiveness and Educational Outcomes Analysis." *ERS Spectrum*, 10(1), 10-19. [EJ 442 889]

Gaffney, Janet S. (1993). "Reading Recovery (r): Widening the Scope of Prevention for the Lowest Achieving Readers. Technical Report No. 580." Urbana, IL: Center for the Study of Reading. [ED 360 624]

Glynn, Ted (1992). "Reading Recovery in Context: Implementation and Outcome." *Educational Psychology*, 12(3-4), 249-61. [EJ 478 468]

Pinnell, Gay Su, et al. (1994). "Comparing Instructional Models for the Literacy Education of High-Risk First Graders." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 29(1), 8-39. [EJ 475 731]

Pollock, John S. (1994). "Reading Recovery Program 1992-93. Elementary and Secondary Education Act—Chapter 1. Final Evaluation Report." Columbus Public Schools, Ohio. Department of Program Evaluation. [ED 376 437]

Sensenbaugh, Roger (1994). "Effectiveness of Reading Recovery Programs." *Reading Research and Instruction*, 34(1), 73-76. [EJ 494 625]

This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. RR93002011. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necssarily represent the official view of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement.